1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
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turns the curds, *lieth in ker*, into solid deep yellow cheese, *lieth in car*. After boiling for a time the liquid is poured into a gourd and the oil on top is removed, to be used as a flavouring for porridge. The cheese is suspended in a net from the roof of a hut in a round gourd, a piece of the shell of which has been cut out so that cords run through it and it acts as a sliding lid (see Fig. 2), and, if air is excluded by a coating of cattle dung, it will keep in good condition for months. Milk may thus be stored in the form of cheese. It is eaten with porridge and is also used for anointing the body.

Sheep and goats are also milked in the mornings, but little importance is attached to their yield, which is drunk by small children and not used for dairy work. The woman milks and the kids and lambs finish what is left in the udders. As they run with their dams at pasture an evening milking is not taken; but during the day hungry herdboys often squeeze the udders and lick the milk off their hands.

Some points that arise from an account of milking and dairy-work deserve emphasis. (1) The present number and distribution of cattle do not permit the Nuer to lead an entirely pastoral life as they would like to do, and possibly did at one time. On a generous estimate the average daily yield to the byre is probably no more than twelve pints, or one and a half pints per person. A mixed economy is, therefore, necessary. (2) Furthermore the fluctuation in household resources, due to *epidemics and transmission of bride-wealth*, is further accentuated by the organic character of the staple diet, for cows only produce milk for a certain period after calving and the yield is not constant. It follows that a single family is not a self-sufficient unit, as far as milk is concerned, for it cannot always ensure an adequate supply. Therefore, since milk is considered essential, the economic unit must be larger than the simple family group. (3) Environmental conditions, as well as need for cereal food to supplement their milk diet, prevent Nuer from being entirely nomadic, but milk food enables them to lead a roving life for part of the year and gives them mobility and elusiveness, as their history shows and as has been recently demonstrated in the Government campaign against them. Milk requires neither storage nor transport, being daily renewed, but, on the other hand, involves a straight dependence on water and vegetation which not only permits, but compels, a wandering

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241 after year till it is utterly exhausted, when they change their homestead site, often moving for some years to a new village. Nevertheless, they know that each year of tillage means further deterioration and judge the impoverishment of the soil by the size of the millet plants and of their yield and by the presence of certain weeds which only flourish on exhausted ground. A garden is cultivated annually for from five to ten years and after it has been left fallow for a few seasons it is tested to see whether the soil is still hard and caked, or loose, soft, and ready to bear a new crop. In gardens cultivated in bush sites away from the villages, on the other hand, people are not confined by the gardens of their neighbours, and it is possible to hoe a virgin piece of ground each year at one end and to abandon an exhausted piece at the other end.

241 262 Nuer gardens are very small. Measurements do not give so clear an idea of their size as noting that in an average year the people in most parts of Nuerland have just enough grain to last them till the following harvest, if they are very economical during the dry season and subsist mainly on milk and fish, while in a bad year they may have to go without porridge for several weeks. Also it may be noted that Nuer do not build granaries, but find small grass and earthenware bins, kept in their huts, sufficient for storage. However, we may judge how important millet is to them less by its quantity than by its place in their total food-supply, for it is not merely a subsidiary item of diet of high nutritive value but is an essential food, since they would be hard pressed to maintain life without it. Nuer fully acknowledge that this is so and in no way despise horticulture, but are, on the whole, industrious gardeners.

• [51]

241 Nevertheless, they consider that horticulture is an unfortunate necessity involving hard and unpleasant labour and not an ideal occupation, and they tend to act on the conviction that the larger the herd the smaller need be the garden. They are herdsmen and not peasants. When I have drawn attention to badly kept gardens or remarked that the crops received no protection from beasts and birds they have been unperturbed, for, while it would be disgraceful to neglect cattle, there are no strong feelings about inattention to gardens. When I have asked them why they do not sow more millet I have

of the hooves which is often fatal. Another disease of unknown symptoms is *puc* (*puc nyacar*, *nyacar*). There is a disease called *kec* which is treated by the animals ears, and sometimes its horns also, being cut with a spear heated in the fire (*ba kec tem kä mar*). This sickness causes abscesses in the ears which are therefore scraped out. It also causes the horns to become hollow and if this is found to be the case the horns are either cut or bored. 232

Goats and sheep have their special diseases: *fanyuain*, probably sheep-pox, *witcuey*, fluke, in which the liver and gall-bladder are enlarged and full of sores, etc. They also suffer from trypanosomiasis.

Jök is a generic name for all diseases of cattle, sheep and goats. The word may be incorporated from the Dinka and some expressions in which it figures, *e.g.*, *jöndapuith*, bovine pleural-pneumonia, show very clearly Dinka construction. The kind of *jök* which is afflicting the cattle is specified in the names of different diseases or in different names for the same disease, *e.g.*, *jöndapuith*, *jökkiec*, *jökdin*, *jok nyantiel*, and *jok nyanjut*. Nuer appear to regard contagious diseases of cattle as spirits which suddenly come, for no apparent reason, as diseases of men come. Nuer say that they are spirits sent by God. They say "*Ce jok ben piny, cue kam piny e kuik*," "The disease has come to earth, it is brought to earth by God."

Besides veterinary medicines used to cure sickness, some of which may have therapeutic properties and be considered drugs, Nuer possess medicines which are used for other purposes than to cure sickness and we probably do not wrongly assess their value when we say it is purely of a magical order. Such are the medicines placed in churning gourds and churned with the milk to ensure a good supply of cheese. The roots of the following plants were recorded as having this use: *Cawan*, (*Trianthema pentandra*) *gitkual*, *kuäk*. The seeds of a sweet smelling plant that grows on camp and village sites called *mïith* (*Ocimum americanum L.*), are boiled with the cheese to make it sweet and keep long. 232 789 251 789

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The women and children sleep in these; the men sleep in the barns, if there are any, or among the cattle. 226 221

People under one chief spend the fishing season at the same fishing camp. Old people sometimes remain in the villages, but the younger ones enjoy the companionship of others and the change from the routine village life. It serves the same purpose as our summer trip.

While at the camp, fish are caught by spearing them with a special spear or by a hook and line left out all night as a trout line is sometimes left, or by the use of a fishing net, if any one is fortunate enough to posses one. 226

Later on, when the river is lower, fish traps are made by placing sticks close together in the river. When ish get into this enclosure they are unable to find the exit nod are speared and taken. Nuer sometimes imitate the sound of fish by making a splashing noise in the water with a stick. Other fish gather, as they think, to when their fellows are, and are speared.

If many fish are caught they are dried and taken back to the village for later use, or possibly they are sent back at once to those who have stayed behind. Sometimes fish are not plentiful and then return trips have to b made to the villages to get dura for food. [251]

When the river begins to rise, fishing in the swamps may be continued for a little while. But soon all return to their villages, for as soon as the rains start, hoeing must be done and dura planted. Also, should their permanent village be across the river from the fishing camp, they must take their cattle over the river before it rises so much that the cattle are unable to swim it in safety. 224 221

THE FOOD-SUPPLY

The Nuer food-supply is frequently limited in quantity; it is also limited in variety. The foods the Nuer will eat 262